

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SIL-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 AGR-05 SCCT-01

SY-04 OPR-01 PER-01 A-01 /079 W

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R 030550Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5317

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BG

SUBJECT: ACTION UNDER THE EMERGENCY

1. WHILE FIVE DAYS OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY OFFER NO SOLID INDICATORS OF ANY IMPROVEMENT IN ADMINISTRATIVE ELAN, MORE ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE. WE KNOW THAT TWO JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BENGALI PRESS HAVE BEEN SEIZED. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, LABOR LEADER MANNAN, MP, HEAD OF THE JATIYO SRAMIK LEAGUE (THE CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF AWAMI LEAGUE AND THE BDG IN THE LABOR FIELD) HAS BEEN HELD ON CHARGES OF MISMANAGEMENT AND MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, DOUBTLESS IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DACCA COTTON MILLS MANAGEMENT BOARD. WE ALSO HEAR OF THE ARRESTS OF LESSER LIGHTS BUT THESE DO NOT APPEAR IN THE PRESS.

2. THE MOST DRAMATIC EVENT WAS THE REPORTED SHOOTING OF TERRORIST LEADER SIRAJ SIKDAR, LEADER OF THE PURBO BANGLA SHORBAHARA PARTY. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, SIKDAR WAS ARRESTED IN CHITTAGONG ON JANUARY 1. BROUGHT
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TO DACCA, HE AGREED DURING INTERROGATION TO AID THE

AUTHORITIES. WHILE TRAVELING BY TRUCK WITH THE POLICE TO THE HIDEOUT OF ONE OF HIS BANDS NEAR DACCA, HE SOUGHT TO ESCAPE AND WAS SHOT IN THE ATTEMPT. HIS DEATH OCCURRED NEAR THE RAKKHI BAHINI CAMP AT SAVAR.

3. COMMENT: THE ARRESTS REVEAL NO PATTERN YET. THAT OF MOUDUD AHMED (DACCA 5885) AND THE TWO JOURNALISTS MAY BE LARGELY CAUTIONARY AND INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE DISCRETION ON THE PART OF OTHERS. REGARDING THE ARREST OF MANNAN, HE MAY SIMPLY HAVE BEEN CORRUPT; HOWEVER, SO ARE MANY OTHERS STILL AT LIBERTY. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE MAY HAVE SOUGHT TO USE HIS JSL POSITION TO CREATE A POWER BASE WITH WHICH TO CHALLENGE HIS AWAMI LEAGUE MENTORS. THE DEATH OF SIKDAR, WHILE IT MAY WELL REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TERRORISM WHICH HAS PLAGUED BANGLADESH, NEVERTHELESS GIVES THE EXTREMISTS A MARTYR. IT IS DISTINCTLY CONCEIVABLE THAT SIKDAR COULD BECOME FAR MORE POTENT IN DEATH THAN HE WAS IN LIFE WHERE HE WAS PERHAPS MORE COMMITTED TO HOMICIDE THAN TO IDEOLOGY. AND UNLESS HIS BODY IS DISPLAYED (TO THE POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT OF THE BDG), THERE WILL SOON GROW UP STORIES THAT HE STILL LIVES, A LA SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MARTIAL LAW, ARRESTS, EXTREMISTS, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DACCA00033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750003-0162
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750180/aaaacsni.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <04 SEP 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACTION UNDER THE EMERGENCY
TAGS: PINT, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006